

Dedication of Patron Saint

The clinking of non-ceremonial bottles being loaded into the refrigerator betrayed to the assembling parishioners of St. Michael's Cornhill that the 'Water Savers' had come in force to demonstrate their practice of saving water by drinking wine.

This was the occasion on which the company's researches into the most appropriate Patron Saint for us, came to fruit. (The real clincher, of course, was the fact that, as Teds Flaxman and Jackson recount in 'Sweet and Wholesome Water', in 1496 there was a 'Fellship of the Brotherhed of Saint Christofer of the Waterberers of the Citie of London.) The service of Choral Eucharist (Missa Brevis Sancti Joannis de Deo, by Joseph Haydn) was a feast of glorious, soaring music Entering the pulpit to deliver his sermon, The Rector (and our Chaplain) the Reverend Peter Mullen requested the Water Conservators to stand as, for the first time, he delivered the Collect he had written for us:

Almighty and most merciful Father who didst call thy servant Christopher faithfully to bear travellers across the raging stream, we beseech thee to prosper and bless this our Company of Water Conservators; hear us as we bind unto ourselves holy Christopher, our Patron Saint; and grant us grace so to follow his good example, to bear one another's burdens cheerfully and ever serve thee in all such good works as thou hast prepared for us to walk in: this we ask for thy Son Our Lord Jesus Christ's sake. Amen

In his sermon, Peter reminded us how relatively recent was the realisation that it was contaminated water that triggered diseases such as Cholera. He pointed out that:

"We worry about the price of petrol, while tens of millions throughout the world worry over where their next bucket of water is coming from. Forget the fashionable superstition of global warming, the unavailability of clean drinking water is the real daily threat to human life on earth."

and went on to assert that the process of water purification:

"continued today by the engineers in the Water Conservators' Company ... is an example of charity.For charitable works are not something left over when you've finished your daily labour: charity is your work, what you apply yourself to thoroughly. And this effort of application costs you. This concern for the good of your neighbour – at whatever cost to

yourself – is the spiritual meaning of charity. As Our Lord said, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these my little ones, ye have done it unto me.”

This, he argued:

“fits precisely with the legend of our St Christopher. His daily labour of bearing people across the torrent, ended with the realisation that in doing so he was carrying Christ.”

At the end of the service, Company members and parishioners listened to a magnificent organ voluntary by Director of music Jonathan Rennert, before filtering into the vestry to be regaled with a sumptuous display of food, and an array of three types of wine, provided by the Master. The sun shone, the groups mingled and conversation flowed: a wonderfully happy event, which, everyone expressed the hope, would become an annual event.

*Bill Halson (Bailiff) an informal
Peter Mullen and the Master,
chatting after the ceremony*

